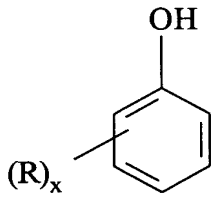
AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (Canceled)

2. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 27, wherein the hydroxylated compound corresponds to the following formula (I):



(I)

in which formula (I):

- the para position is free,

- x is an integer between 1 and 4,

- R represents:

- a hydrogen atom,

- a hydrocarbon group having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms selected from the alkyl, alkoxy, hydroxyalkyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, phenoxy, alkoxyalkyl, fluoroalkyl, hydroxyalkoxyalkylene groups,

- a hydroxyl group,

- a CHO group,

- an acyl group having from 2 to 6 carbon atoms,

- a halogen atom,

- two R groups placed on two vicinal carbon atoms can form together and with the carbon atoms which carry them a benzene ring.

3. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 27, wherein the hydroxylated aromatic compound corresponds to formula (I), in which:

- x is equal to 0, 1, 2 or 3,

- R represents one of the following groups or functions:

- a hydrogen atom,

- a linear or branched alkyl radical having from 1 to 10 carbon atoms,

- a linear or branched alkoxy radical having from 1 to 10 carbon atoms,

- an -OH group,

- a -CHO group,

- a halogen atom,

- a $-CF_3$ group.

4. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 27, wherein the hydroxylated aromatic compound corresponds to formula (I) in which the R radicals which are identical or different are a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched alkyl radical with 1 to 4 carbon atoms, a linear or branched alkoxy radical with 1 to 4 carbon atoms, a -CHO group, a chlorine atom, and x is equal to 0 or 1.

5. (Currently Amended) A process according to ~~one of~~ claim 27, wherein the hydroxylated aromatic compound of formula (I) is selected from the group consisting of phenol, o-cresol, m-cresol, 3-ethyl phenol, 2-tert-butyl phenol, guaiacol, guetol, and 2-isopropoxy phenol.

6. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 17, wherein the catalyst is a compound carrying at least two carboxylic functions corresponding to the following formula (II):

$HOOC-R_1-COOH$ (II)

in which formula (II), R_1 represents a valency bond or an optionally substituted hydrocarbon radical containing 1 to 40 carbon atoms.

7. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 6, wherein the catalyst is a compound having at least two carboxylic functions corresponding to formula (II) wherein R_1 symbolises a substituted or non-substituted hydrocarbon radical which can be a linear or branched, saturated or unsaturated acyclic aliphatic radical; a monocyclic or polycyclic, saturated, unsaturated, or aromatic carbocyclic radical; a monocyclic or polycyclic, saturated, unsaturated or aromatic heterocyclic radical.

8. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 6, wherein the catalyst is a compound with at least two carboxylic functions corresponding to formula (II), in which R_1 represents a linear or branched, acyclic aliphatic residue having 1 to 12 carbon atoms, saturated or containing one or more unsaturations on the chain which can be single or conjugated double bonds, or triple bonds-, the hydrocarbon chain can optionally be:

(1) - interrupted by one of the following groups called Y:

-O-;-CO-;-COO-;-N-;-CO-N;-S-;-SO_2-

R_2 R_2

in which formulae R_2 represents hydrogen or a linear or branched alkyl radical having 1 to 4 carbon atoms, or a radical of -$(CH_2)_p$ - COOH type in which p is a number between t and 5,

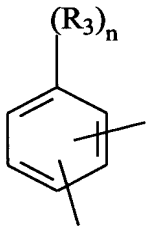
(2) - and/or bearing one of the following substituents:

- OH; - COOH; - CHO; - NO_p; - CN; - NH_2; - SH; -X; CF_3

- NH - $[(CH2)_P$ - COOH] or - N - $[(CH2)_P$ - $COOH]_2$

with X representing a halogen atom, and p having the meaning given hereinabove.

9. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 6, wherein the catalyst is a compound with at least two carboxylic functions corresponding to formula (II), in which R_1 represents a benzene residue corresponding to the general formula (III):



(III)

in which formula (III):

- n is an integer from 0 to 4,
- R_3 represents one of the following groups or functions,
  - hydrogen atom,
  - linear or branched alkyl radical having from I to 4 carbon atoms,
  - linear or branched alkoxy radical having from I to 4 carbon atoms,
  - methylene or ethylene dioxy radical,
  - -CHO group,
  - phenyl or benzyl radical,
  - halogen atom.

10. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 6, wherein the catalyst is a compound with at least two carboxylic functions corresponding to formula (II) in which the R1 radical represents a polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon divalent residue; the rings can form between themselves ortho-condensed, ortho- and peri-condensed systems.

11. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 6, wherein the catalyst is a compound with at least two carboxylic functions corresponding to formula (II), in which R_1 represents a carbocyclic residue which is saturated or contains I or 2 unsaturations in the ring.

12. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 6, wherein the catalyst is a compound with at least two carboxylic functions corresponding to formula (II), in which R_1 represents a divalent radical constituted by a chain formation of two to four residues as defined hereinabove, an aliphatic residue, an aromatic residue or a cycloaliphatic residue, connected together by a valency bond or by a function group.

13. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 6, wherein the catalyst is a compound with at least two carboxylic functions corresponding to formula (II) selected from the group consisting of:

· oxalic acid

· malonic acid

- succinic acid
- glutaric acid
- adipic acid
- 2,4-dimethyl adipic acid
- pimelic acid
- suberic acid
- azelaic acid
- sebacic acid
- dodecane dioic acid
- fumaric acid
- maleic acid
- cyclohexane 1,4-dicarboxylic acid,
- phthalic acid
- isophthalic acid
- terephthalic acid
- phenylenediacetic acid
- naphthalene 1,5-dicarboxylic acid
- naphthalene 1,6-dicarboxylic acid
- 4,4'-diphenylcarboxylic acid
- 3,3'-diphenylcarboxylic acid
- bis(4-hydroxycarbonyl) phenyl oxide

· bis(3-hydroxycarbonyl) phenyl oxide

· 4,4'-dihydroxycarbonyl diphenylsulphone

· 3,3'-dihydroxycarbonyl diphenylsulphone

· ethylenediaminotetracetic acid (E.D.T.A.)

· diethylenetriaminopentacetic acid (D.T.P.A.)

· nitrilotriacetic acid (N.T.A.) and

· N-(2-hydroxyethyl)ethylene diarninotriacetic acid (H.E.D.T.A.).

14. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 27, wherein the aqueous solution of glyoxylic acid contains monofunctional acids.

15. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 27, wherein the aqueous solution of glyoxylic acid has a concentration which varies from 15 to 70% by weight.

16. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 27, wherein the molar ratio between the hydroxylated aromatic compound of formula (I) and the glyoxylic acid varies between 1.5 and 4.0.

17. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 27, wherein the quantity of alkali metal hydroxide is the stoichiometric quantity necessary to salify all the salifiable

groups of the hydroxylated aromatic compound of formula (I) and to salify the carboxylic function of the glyoxylic acid.

18. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 27, wherein the concentration of the hydroxylated aromatic compound of formula (I) is between 0.5 and 1.5 moles/litre

19. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 27, wherein the quantity of catalyst used is such that the molar ratio between the catalyst and the hydroxylated aromatic compound of formula (I) is between 0.005 and 0.025, and preferably between 0.01 and 0.02.

20. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 27, wherein the quantity of catalyst used, as expressed by the ratio between the number of moles of catalyst and the number of moles of glyoxylic acid, is selected between 0.5 and 2.5%.

21. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 27, wherein the catalyst is entirely or partly provided by the aqueous solution of glyoxylic acid.

22. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 21, wherein the solution of glyoxylic acid comprises between 0.6 and 3%, by weight, of oxalic acid, as expressed in relation to the weight of glyoxylic acid.

23. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 27, wherein the catalyst is introduced with the aqueous solution of glyoxylic acid or into the starting reaction medium containing the hydroxylated aromatic compound of formula (I), water and the alkali metal hydroxide.

24. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 27, wherein the temperature of the reaction varies between 20°C and 60°C.

Claim 25 (Canceled)

26. (Currently Amended) A process for the production of 4-hydroxy ~~benzaldehyde~~ benzaldehydes ~~and vanillin and analogues~~ by oxidation of an optionally substituted p-hydroxymandelic acid[[,]] ~~3-methoxy p-hydroxymandelic acid, 3-ethoxy p-hydroxymandelic acid, or 3-isopropoxy p-hydroxymandelic acid~~ obtained in accordance with the process of claim 27.

27. (Previously Presented) A process for the preparation of an optionally substituted p-hydroxymandelic compound, comprising condensing, in water and in the presence of an alkaline agent, (1) a hydroxylated aromatic compound with (2) glyoxylic acid, the para-position of said hydroxylated aromatic compound being free and said condensation being carried out in the presence of a catalytically effective amount of (3) a polycarboxylic compound.

28. (Previously Presented) A process for producing hydroxyarylacetic acids comprising reducing the optionally substituted ρ-hydroxymandelic compounds obtained according to the process of claim 27.

29. (Previously Presented) A process for producing hydroxyarylglyoxylic acids or hydroxyaromatic aldehydes which comprises oxidizing the optionally substituted ρ-hydroxymandelic compounds obtained according to the process of claim 27.

30. (New) The process according to claim 26, wherein 3-methoxy-p-hydroxymandelic acid is oxidized to vanillin.

31. (New) The process according to claim 26, wherein 3-ethoxy-p-hydroxymandelic acid is oxidized to ethylvanillin.

32. (New) The process according to claim 26, wherein 3-isopropoxy-p-hydroxy mandelic acid is oxidized to isopropylvanillin.